



August 2008

Dear Colleagues:

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is excited to continue offering learning opportunities for early/school-age care and education professionals. The training courses are designed to help professionals complete annual licensing training requirements, earn community college credit through the endorsement program and earn continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain professional credentials.

The professional development courses in this catalog challenge early/school-age care and education professionals to increase their knowledge and develop creative ways to design and maintain nurturing and engaging learning environments for children. If you are unsure of which training courses are best for you, take a few moments and think through your day. Consider the times that more knowledge would enable you to handle challenging situations. Think about your goals and career path. Ultimately, consider the skills that will enable you to offer quality care and learning opportunities for children. These considerations will help you select classes that are meaningful and beneficial to your professional growth and development.

More than ever this career field is expanding and professionals have more opportunities to grow. This year Governor Kaine created the Office of Early Childhood Development. The new office will expand access to development programs for children from birth to age five. Virginia's Community Colleges successfully developed a statewide curriculum in early childhood education, which provides opportunities for students seeking applied degrees that prepare them for the workforce. Institutions of higher learning continue to collaborate on articulation agreements that enable professionals to have a seamless path from community college to the university in pursuit of a bachelor's degree. For more information on early/school-age care and education initiatives visit <http://myfuture.vccs.edu/earlychildhood/>.

Please challenge yourself to learn more about child development by taking a new course, reading an early childhood development book, joining a professional association or starting a professional development discussion group. I encourage you to take this opportunity to increase your knowledge of early/school-age care and education so that you are better informed, and the children in your care will benefit now, as well as years from now.

Thank you for your dedication to children and quality child care in Virginia.

Sincerely,

Zelda Boyd, Acting Quality Program Manager
Office of Early Childhood Development, Virginia Department of Social Services

*VDSS Mission:
People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse
and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves,
their families and communities.*